

# Mid-morning Nutrition Break



## The Basics:

### ★ How Does a Mid-morning Nutrition Break Work?

This model is also called breakfast after first period or second chance breakfast. As the name implies, students eat breakfast during a break in the morning, usually between 9:00 am and 10:00 am. Reimbursable breakfasts are individually packaged in grab 'n go bags. These are usually offered from mobile carts or tables located in high traffic areas where there are many students. Breakfasts can be hot or cold, depending on a school's facilities. Foods that are easy to eat or hand held are popular and more convenient.

Many schools already offer a break from classes in the morning. By serving a reimbursable meal at this time, students who were not hungry first thing in the morning or those who ate breakfast very early, now have a chance to eat a healthy meal. Serving a reimbursable meal is a healthy choice compared to vending. Reimbursable meals also accommodate students who may not have the money to purchase vending.

Students are responsible for throwing away their trash. Extra trash cans in the areas where students are between classes helps to ensure this happens.

### ★ Why Serve a Mid-morning Nutrition Break?

Most importantly, when you offer a mid-morning nutrition break, more students eat breakfast. Many middle and high school students are not interested in eating breakfast first thing in the morning. A mid-morning nutrition break is a great way to reach these students as well as those who do not have time to eat before school, or who ate very early in the morning. In some cases, schools do not have available space to serve breakfast. Serving breakfast from carts outside of the cafeteria eliminates this problem. A mid-morning nutrition break can be prepared quickly, with few staff.

### ★ When Does a Mid-morning Nutrition Break Work Best?

A mid-morning nutrition break works well in many different schools. The following qualities help to make a mid-morning nutrition break successful in schools:

- A milk break or other break in the morning already exists
- Busses arrive just before classes begin
- There is no time to serve breakfast before classes
- Students rely on vending machines for snacks in the morning
- Teachers are supportive of breakfast and realize its importance to learning
- There is no space to serve breakfast
- The cafeteria is centrally located

# Mid-morning Nutrition Break



## Success Story:

**School:** Lodi Elementary School  
**District:** School District of Lodi  
**Contact:** Paula Larrabee,  
 Food Service Director  
 608-592-3853 x 4433  
 (larrapa@lodi.k12.wi.us)  
 Principal: Trevor Hovde  
 (hovdetr@lodi.k12.wi.us)  
 Grades served: 3,4,5  
 Enrollment: 373  
 Free/Reduced: 10%  
 Breakfast Participation: 48%  
 Lunch Participation: 72%

Paula Larrabee, Food Service Director for the School District of Lodi, noticed that participation in the breakfast program at the elementary school was very low. She also noticed that the students didn't want to stop playing outside before school started to come inside and eat breakfast. Bussing was also a huge obstacle in this rural community, as many students arrived at school without time for breakfast before class. Paula began to think of ways to reach these students. She decided to change the non-reimbursable milk break into a nutrition break that offered either a milk choice or a full reimbursable breakfast to students.

Paula created new menus that were quick to assemble and easy for the students to grab. Breakfast always includes milk and juice plus a choice of two other items such as string cheese and muffin. The most popular breakfast is milk, juice, mini bagels, and a fruit snack. She also purchased a cart that would fit in the hallway, along with the milk cooler, to serve breakfast. The students use a disposable 3 lb food tray to hold their items.

Breakfast is served at four times between 9:15 and 9:45 so it is convenient for the teachers/aids to set their own time on when the students will participate. They choose when to have it, before or after recess. Students walk down the hall, grab their breakfast from the cart located just outside of the lunchroom, which can be accessed from two sides, punch in their four-digit pin number and head to the lunchroom or back to their classrooms to eat. Students can choose just milk or a full breakfast and no a la carte purchases are allowed. Students are responsible for their trash and teachers' aids provide supervision.

One Food Service staff works 1.75 hours per day assembling the breakfast on site, doing clean up and is responsible for the check out process. The breakfast is kept simple with only a minimum amount of prep time needed. There was some resistance to the idea at first from the teaching staff, however most are very positive and supportive of the program. In fact, on bagel day, many staff and teachers come down to eat too!

By looking at the needs of her school, Paula successfully increased participation in the breakfast program from 8% to 48 % with just some simple changes from a before school program to a mid-morning nutrition break!